Mawson's Antarctic Expedition.
Letter from R. Bage, B.C.E.

Though this subject does not, strictly speaking, belong to any department of Engineering, yet it is one which, while appealing to the interest of the general public, must more particularly command the attention of the scientific section of the community. To our School a further definite interest attaches inasmuch as three past students, namely, Robert Bage, B.C.E.; C. A. Hoadley, B.Sc., and F. L. Stillwell, B.Sc., are accompanying the expedition.

We are indebted to Mrs. E. Bage, for permission to publish the following two letters, which are reproduced almost in full. This is the first publication of the letters in Melbourne, though extracts from them have appeared in Sydney daily papers.

S.Y. "Aurora," South Pacific Ocean.
Dec. 29th, 12.45 a.m. Lat. 63, Long. 157 (q.p.).
I wrote last just in time to catch the Toroa when she left Macquarie on Saturday, 16th December, with our mail and a load of oil on board. Also she took Eitel, the secretary, back, and the shipwrecked crew and most of Hatch's men. The Toroa party all went ashore and joined Webb and Ninnis, who had been living with the islanders for some time, Webb taking magnetic observations and Ninnis looking after the dogs. The dogs were all tied to a rope among the tussocks on the flat about a quarter of a mile from the hut. The rope has to be weighted down pretty well, as when they see their tucker coming they all pull one way with a will. They were fed on the island once a day on sea elephant meat or blubber, roughly about 1½ lbs. each, I should judge, and were all looking particularly fit when we left. While the ordinary stores for Macquarie party were being landed from Toroa, on the western beach, the wireless stores were landed about half a mile further north, right under North Head. This was necessary because it had been decided for some reason to put the station right on top of the Head. There is a track by which one can climb up to the top of the Head from the beach and climb down again on the western side of the Head where there is a marshy flat edged with rocks, which form good boat harbours. There is no way round to this flat without going over the Head, but a wire ropeway was rigged last year by the islanders from the flat up a steep gully to the top of the Head, and this was used for hauling up all the wireless gear. The islanders used it to get some blubber from elephants they had killed on the flat. It consisted of two wire ropes about ¾ in. in diameter, running parallel to each other about 4 feet apart. The lower ends were made fast to a large rock on the flat and the upper ends to a holdfast buried on the top of the hill. A
single block ran on each wire and these blocks were connected by a messenger wire passing through a block at the top. A load was hooked on to the block at the bottom, and a basket or bag to the one at the top, and the bag is then filled with earth and then let go. If there is not enough earth, the load only comes half way up and has to be hauled by hand, which is pretty rotten, as the messenger wire is so small, while if too much earth is put in the load comes up with a rush, and the men at the top and bottom have some hairbreadth escapes. About two cwt. loads can be taken up like this. As soon as some of the wireless stores were landed a party of five was landed, and camped on the flat, and started getting stuff to the top. Later, after the Toroa left, those of us from the hut used to go to the top of the hill from the south, while the "Auroras" would come up from the wireless landing each morning. The heavy stuff, masts, engine, etc., were got up by pulling the two wires together and putting a large block on the two, and attaching a rope to the block. All available hands get on to the rope and walk away with it along a flat on the top of the hill. This walk was only about 50 yards long, so for each haul it had to be covered about six times, while for very heavy ones when a purchase was used, twelve walks were necessary. However, all the gear was got up safely, except the generator, which got away when nearly at the top and dashed right to the bottom. It was smashed up a bit, but not past repair, and no one was hurt. The Antarctic generator was left on the island, and we will repair the damaged one. While everything was being brought up, holes were dug for the masts and their holdfasts, and a small hut was built out of timber from the wreck, packing-cases and rubberoid. This is to serve as living room for the two wireless men and for instruments. The engine-room was left for the Macquarie party to erect. Also a start was made with erecting the party's hut down below. The masts themselves were finally erected by Friday, 22nd—at least the lower masts and top-masts were. The ground was very poor for holding, and it was not considered safe to put up the topgallant and royal masts without extra holdfasts. However both these are quite light spars and can be erected by the Macquarie party if the extra height is needed. On the evening of 22nd, the ship went round North Head to try and get water on the East coast of the island, but it was too rough to land, so she anchored off the eastern beach over-night, hoping to get calmer weather. However, the N.E. wind freshened in the morning, so she decided to go round to her old anchorage and get water on the West coast. In getting up anchor, the cable parted, and so we lost one of our two anchors, and about the same time the motor boat was washed stern on against the counter of the ship and was badly strained. However, it is not past repair. When the ship got back to Western Bay, she anchored again and we got a flag message to kill 15 of the 40 sheep which were left. We had been in communication with her the night
before, as Madigan and I both know a bit of Morse, and there is a lamp on board. We had to use a hurricane lamp and plate, which is slow, but effective. The rest of the afternoon we put in killing and dressing sheep, and after ten I tried to get into touch with the ship, which we noticed was no longer anchored, but steaming slowly round. I got no answer, and was just going to go back when someone came along the beach to tell us that Dr. Mawson had landed in the whale boat, and we were all to go off at once. We all cut "home" and packed up and took our kits down to the boat, which by that time had all the sheep carcasses on board. Some of us were taken on, but I was sent back to get signal. After about 20 minutes we got a message not to wait, but to be ready by 7 a.m. We all left our kits on the beach and just took our blankets back to the hut. Turned out at 6 a.m., on Sunday, 24th, to find Arch. Hoadley had porridge, bacon and cocoa ready for us, and we got down to the beach at 7, and spent from then to about 2.30 in making about five trips in the whaler getting off dogs, live sheep, kits and men. Each trip was about a mile and a half, and there was about half a gale blowing off the shore, so it was pretty hard work rowing back from the ship. We all decided that the motor boat had been quite worth bringing, even if she never floats again. It must have saved quite two days at Macquarie.

At 2.30 on December 24th, we steamed away from N.W. Harbour, dipping our ensign in answer to "Good-bye and Good Luck," flying from the wireless masts (at least there were some signals flying. The flags were got from the wreck, but the wireless men, Sawyer and Sandell, had no code, so they told us what they were going to signal. That is quite by the way, though). When we first got on board we heard why the ship had been steaming round. She had commenced to drag on the one remaining anchor, and on heaving up it was found that the stock had carried away, so she had to cruise about till a wooden stock was fitted, made out of two wireless "dead men," and some chains. I think all of us who had been ashore were a bit sorry to leave the island in some ways. We had beautiful weather until the wind came up and the two islanders who remained, "Alec" and "Tom" by name, were awfully decent, and did all they could for us. They had one hut for years, with a small lean-to at one end, and when the "Clyde" was wrecked they built another, so we had plenty of room. Murphy, Jones, and Stillwell slept in the old hut, Webb and Ninnis in the lean-to Hoadley, Whetter, Moyes, Dovers, Correll, Lasseron, Alec, Tom and myself, in the new hut. Each day we told off a cook and cook's mate to look after us, and as there was very little to do, Alec or Tom superintended the cooking with splendid results. Had our first meal of penguin steaks and seal elephant steaks on the island. Both very good, even if you are only a little hungry. Of the Macquarie party the two wireless men stayed at the wireless camp, while Blake and Hamilton slept in a lean-to near all their stores, and
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came over to meals; Ainsworth stayed on board the Aurora till just before she left.

After leaving North End we went down the West coast and soon got well under the lee of the land, and at about 4.30 we got to the S.W. corner of the island, just off Caroline Cove. This is a fairly open bay going in about a mile from the sea, but the entrance is narrow, as there is a large pile of rocks right in the middle. About 12 fathoms right up to steep, rocky sides. This cove has been responsible for more than half of the 30 or 40 known wrecks on the island, as it is quite open to S.W. The whaler was put off and took some soundings, and then we steamed slowly in and anchored, the ship swinging only about four chains off the rocks. They were rather careful about the soundings, as the ship came into this cove when she first reached the island and deposited some stores for the island party, and while waiting for the boat she struck a rock pinnacle, and bumped very badly, heeling over about 20 degrees. However, no serious damage was done, as she is only making two or three feet of water a day, which is quite normal for a wooden ship.

As soon as we anchored, we went ashore in the whaler and landed on a little pebble beach, about half a mile from the ship, among thousands of penguins and a few sea elephants. Good water was running down one little creek, so we formed a line and passed buckets down, taking turns at towing the filled casks out. It was fairly slow work, but by 11.30 p.m. we were back on board and 400 gallons of good water in the tanks. As we were tired, we all turned in, in spite of it being Christmas Eve, but at 2.30 a.m. we were awakened by heavy bumping, and getting up on deck, found the ship nearly broadside on and the stern bumping hard on the rocks. Half of us hauled in on the stern-kedge anchor, which luckily held, while the rest got up the anchor which had suddenly dragged, and in about a quarter of an hour the propeller was clear of the rocks and we steamed out safely, the only loss being the kedge, the wire rope of which parted just when it was no longer needed; also an empty cask was left on the beach.

We had all been detailed off in watches before, and as soon as it was decided to leave with the water we had, Dr. Mawson told us to carry on and take the 4 to 8. We got the anchor snugged up on deck and the whaler on board, and about 6.30 we steamed off for Antarctica. It was a beautiful day when we got clear of the mist hanging over the island, and we were all glad when we passed the “Bishop and Clerk,” a desolate rock sticking up out of the swell about 30 miles south of the island. I don’t think anyone wanted any more “warnings.”

Christmas dinner we had to have by watches, just as all our other meals, as the table can only seat 8. Tomato soup, fresh mutton, ham, spinach, potatoes, plum duff, dates, claret and cigars! Photo. taken of most of us on the bridge in glorious sunlight. Ever since then we have been standing watches...
in 3. Dog watches in afternoon, so we get different time every day. When on watch all we have to do is to keep handy in case we are wanted to “haul on the weather-braces,” or some other mysterious rope. Also try and keep the dogs more or less untangled. The 8 to 12 also peels potatoes daily for the cook, and the 12 to 4 pumps fresh water. We are on water ration of 1 qt. a day for all purposes. This comes out at about half a pannikin of tea or cocoa per meal, and salt water for washing your teeth, so one never likes to cut the bread for anyone else. However, most of us got a wash at Caroline Cove.

Saturday, Dec. 30th, 3.45 p.m. Above was written during slack part of one or two watches. Things have been going along very quietly till yesterday. It has been beautifully calm, but a light fog for three days. Practically nothing to do on watch, as we have had a following wind all the time. Yesterday, at 4.20, we heard “Ice on starboard bow,” and all rushed up and could see dim bergs all round us. In about ten minutes we were alongside our first berg, and it was a beautiful one, probably threequarters of a mile by half a mile, and 50 to 80 ft. above water, quite fresh from the “Barrier.” The blues and greens were absolutely past description. For an hour or so we were passing bergs, none as good as our first, and then at 6.30 we suddenly ran into an open pack. The most beautiful sight I have ever seen. Ice everywhere, gradually fading away in the fog, about 300 yards away. All floating quite loosely, the spaces between the large lumps of 60 or 70 tons being filled with smaller and smaller ones, till there was hardly a square foot uncovered. The loose pack in a swell is very dangerous, as the large lumps can swing against the ship and stove her in, which cannot happen if the pack is close. So after going about half a mile into it, we turned round and came out into open water, and followed the edge west for a couple of miles, and then were lucky enough to get clear of it and so headed south again. Last night at 12 o’clock, it was nearly broad daylight for the first time, while to-day we got our first cold snap, just under freezing, with a cold beam wind and snow. Very chilly hauling on ropes with snow crystals on them.

Monday, Jan. 1st, 1912. 2.50 a.m. On watch again. New Year’s Day. Just near the circle. It isn’t often one sees the New Year in in daylight, a beautiful red sunset and sunrise combined, with huge bergs showing up against it and a line of pack all along the southern horizon.

All Saturday night and Sunday we were working round the pack edging south all the time, but going mostly west. A man in the crow’s nest most of the time, as the fog has disappeared. Sometimes we go through a tongue of pack and so save a detour of a few miles. The chief objection to this is that we are using coal without getting much further south. However, we have had a very easy run down so far.
Yesterday we had each to make our own sledge harness. It has to be sewn up out of a strip of canvas, and it is pretty hard till one gets used to getting the most out of the sailmaker’s “palm.” The harness is very simple. It is a strip about four inches wide which passes round the hips very loosely, the ends of the strip being joined by a strongly sewn strip about \( \frac{3}{4} \) inches wide and 7 inches long, round which the pulling rope passes. A couple of shoulder straps prevent it falling below the hips. It is worn low on the hips so as not to affect one’s dinner, if any. Wild tells us that if worn higher it is almost impossible to pull when hungry. It’s rather a good idea each man making his own, for then he has only himself to blame if it carries away. Before we go any real sledging trips, however, they will probably all be strengthened with the sewing machine, and tested to a ton or so.

Yesterday evening, after tea, we were cutting across a tongue of pack when a sea-leopard was seen quite close. It was shot, and two of the seamen got across the ice and put a line round it, and we all hauled it on board. One of them got a ducking while getting on board, but he was holding the line at the time, so he was none the worse. The leopard was skinned and its meat taken for the dogs. Skin should make a good specimen. 8ft. 8in. long and 4ft. 11in. in girth.

My watch was the first watch of the New Year, so we were on deck a few minutes early, and had the whistle blowing, tins rattling, and revolvers firing in good time at the last bell of 1911. Two or three minutes later, Hurley took a photo, of a group on the bridge. The sun was about 8 degrees below the horizon, so the light was rather poor, but will probably be some good.

Yesterday, all day we had the “iceblink white and near” in real earnest. A brilliant strip over the pack up to an altitude of about 3 or 4 degrees. We have not yet seen the “bowhead breaching clear,” but we have seen one or two “killers” and one “right” whale. Personally, I don’t know the difference between any of them. They all look “very like a whale” to me. Just getting near the end of the watch. In this calm weather with no sails set we have only one on deck, the rest of us working, reading, smoking or drowsing below. In my watch I have Hoadley, Stillwell, Dovers (Survey, N.S.W.), Watson (Geology, Syd.), Close (Biology, Syd.), Whetter (Med., N.Z.), Webb and McLean (Med., Syd), have the other watches. Wild and Murphy do no watch, while Ninnis and Mertz look after the dogs. Mertz is in our watch for meals only. He is very funny in some of his English—though remarkably good on the whole. He told the steward the other day that “too little porridge is plenty, too much is enough.” This morning he came up to see the New Year in, with a sleeping bag over his arm, just in pyjamas (temperature, 26), and while waiting for the photo, he got into the bag. Hannam
picked up some snow and threw it over him, and he said, "No! No! No! Hannam, that is not serious!!"

8 bells. Have just been waking Moyes, who is in our cabin and is on the 4 to 8, by throwing lumps of Aurora cocoanut "cake" at him. A marvellous cake, beats Ethel's snowflake that we buried under the willow tree. This will bounce two or three feet off the ward-room table. Will turn in now. Don't have breakfast till 8.30—third setting to-day, which is great comfort.

Thursday, Jan. 4th, 1912. Tuesday passed just as Monday. Skirted westward along the pack, edging sometimes a little south, and sometimes having to go a bit north. In the afternoon we killed some more sheep, and while passing through one tongue of pack we tried to ice ship by anchoring to a floe with an ice-anchor. Ice-anchor is made of iron 2½in. in diameter. One man can just about carry one. The floe chosen was one about 50 yards square, standing about 5 feet above water. It proved very soft on top, and the swell was rather too heavy, with result that anchor was lost (making our third lost anchor), and we only got about 100 gallons of water. However, that is sufficient for the present. On Wednesday I had the 4 to 8 morning watch and had been on deck about an hour when we saw a long line of barrier ice. This naturally caused great excitement, as there was no idea of a barrier here. For four or five hours we skirted the pack about five miles from the barrier going west, and then saw that the barrier cliff stopped suddenly, and a water sky showed over the pack, so we turned south and barged straight into the pack. In about an hour we were in clear water, just under the eastern side of a barrier running south as far as we could see. We ran down this about fourteen miles, when we came to another corner round which the barrier trends about south-east, also as far as we can see, and in clear water too. The glass was falling and a south-east wind springing up, so we came back round this last corner, and have been running up and down this 14 mile face, sheltered from our first blizzard. At present it is blowing and snowing hard, although we are well under the lee of the barrier. It must be terrible on top of the barrier.

(Lat. 65 deg. 57 min. S. Long. 143 deg. E. approx.)

Yesterday the barrier was a beautiful sight in the sun, while to-day we can only see it now and then, though we are only half a mile away. It has a vertical face about 50ft. high, above which it slopes gradually up to about 120ft. All along the 14 miles which we have seen closely, there is not a single crack or crevass.

We are going to lie here until the blizzard is over, and will then run along the barrier south, or south-east, however it may go, and will probably get right into the eastern end of Adelie Land in clear water. This barrier explains how D'Urville found clear water along Adelie Land, and why we could not get S. further E. where we wanted to. The pack is prevented from coming W. by this barrier, and so on the W. of
it there is clear water, and on the E. there is heavy pack. The
first or main party will be landed as soon as we strike land at
the inner end of the barrier, and it is not likely that we shall
be able to reach the Magnetic Pole from here as we are so far
to the east. However, a new discovery like this is a great
thing right at the beginning. Probably not much time will be
wasted landing us once it is begun, so I may not be able to
tell you anything about it.

In case I cannot write later, would you mind sending down
my suit-case by the Aurora when she comes to relieve us, with
a good suit and boots (one pair), a shirt or two, tie, collar and
stud; also please buy a seven and one-eighth felt hat, and a
heavy ready-made suit (Buckley's could supply the right size)
to wear on board on the way back. We will have any amount
of underclothing, but will need the decent suit to go ashore in.
A £5 note in one of the pockets would also be useful I expect.
Mr. Corner, the second engineer, will look after it for me. If
the Aurora does not actually visit Melbourne you could con-
sign the box to him and post him the key.

Tuesday, 9th Jan., 9.30 a.m. Lat. 67. deg. 00. Long. 143 deg.
Not landed yet, though well on the way to it. Thursday,
4th, and Friday, 5th, it was blowing hard all day. At about
7 p.m., on Friday, however, it moderated, and as the glass was
rising (it had dropped to 28.7), we ventured round the corner
and followed the barrier S.E. After a time we lost it as we
kept our course, while it trended away due east. All day Sat-
urday we steamed through open sea, crossing the circle at 4
p.m., which we celebrated at tea in South Australian claret,
drinking to "our next Southward crossing." The wind had
died down, but it was still snowing now and then. Tempe-

ture about 29 deg. F. In the evening we suddenly saw Bar-
rier loom up dead ahead, square to our course. We could not
see very far either way, so all there was to do was to follow it
S.W. Towards midnight we sighted our first land! and found
ourselves in a large bay about ten miles across. On the east
the barrier disappeared southward into the snow and mist,
while to the west was apparently a mountain range. It was
completely covered with ice and had a barrier foot of 50 to
100ft. high, but sloped upwards gradually to probably 1000
feet. The water shallowed to 30 or 40 fathoms, and we
steamed cautiously past rocky islands a few yards in diameter
all snow-covered. The covering was washed away at the
edges so we could really see the rocks. The barrier foot round
the land was far more irregular than the barrier proper, show-
ing that the ice was being forced over rocks and not floating.
In one place we saw a huge ice scarp fully 200ft. high. At
the foot, just above water, were two large rocks evidently too
strong for the ice, which had opened out behind them. Those
two rocks were the only signs of land we could see for miles.
Once or twice to the S.W. we thought we could see a high
mountain through the clouds, but no one was sure of it. As
there was no chance of landing, we skirted the land N.W. and towards midnight we found ourselves in another bay, “land” S. and W. all ice-covered and innumerable islands blocking the north. As it was too thick to see whether we were missing any possible landing places, we steamed out again into clear water and lay to for the “night.”

On Sunday it cleared up a bit and we cruised round a couple of likely looking bergs to ice ship, but after nearly carrying away our jib-boom on one berg, we gave it up. Most of them were too high, while the ones with low edges sloped up too steeply to be safe to land on. Finally we steamed off west close into the same “land” past dozens of islands, but saw no possible landing place till late that night, when we saw a rocky point projecting out. As it meant taking all stores per boat at least two miles, it was decided to find a better place if possible, so on we went again.

Monday was a glorious day, clear blue sky, no wind, blue sea and ice-covered land. About mid-day we were off the centre of a large open bay, when we saw apparently a large rock patch to our south, so we turned straight towards it. We steamed in about three hours, probably 15 miles, and then hove to in about 50 fathoms in absolutely calm water. We got the whaler over and Dr. Mawson, Wild, Madigan, Bickerton, Kennedy, Webb and I rowed off towards the rocks, which were apparently about a quarter of a mile away. As we got in the rocks resolved into a number of small islands, and we had to row about two miles till we found ourselves in a beautiful little boat harbour with 7 or 8 feet of water and easy landing either on rocks sloping down into the water or on to a little ice foot about 8 feet above the water. At about 4.30 we stepped on to (we hope) genuine Antarctic Continent. Dozens of Weddell seals lying round and plenty of Adelie penguins. From the boat harbour the snow-covered rocks sloped up gradually to the south, changing to blue ice up and up to a sharp sky line, apparently only a mile away. A sextant from the ship, however, gave it 20 miles away and about 1400 ft. high. On either side of the harbour are rocky hillocks, up to possibly 150 feet. While Dr. Mawson and Wild were prospecting for a hut site, the rest of us snowballed and went about half a mile up the ice slope, where we got a glorious view. It was very hot work in the sun, as there was no wind, although it was only 34 deg. in the shade. The bay is semicircular, and we were on a point projecting a little bit right at the middle of it. We looked down on all the little wedding-cake islands and beyond them could see the ship absurdly small alongside even a small berg. The crow’s nest was just about level with the flat top of the berg. The penguins were awfully funny. One would come 300 or 400 yards across to us all by himself to see what we were. We dropped a coat over one, and he had a glorious fight with it and looked for more. Going back to the boat a seal was killed and its meat taken for the dogs, and the hut
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site decided about 50 yards from the boat harbour, and then we rowed back to the ship, getting there for a late tea at 8.20 p.m. The water among the islands is only about 20 to 30 feet deep in most places, and all covered with sea-weed, so should be a regular Hesperides for the biologists. As soon as we got back the motor launch was put into the water and the launch and whaler loaded up with mutton and hut timber. We steamed round the islands and got fairly close to the ice face to the west of our point, and the boats went ashore. Meanwhile we had half of us turned in and knew nothing till 12.30 a.m. Tuesday, when we were turned out to get the boats up. To our surprise we found it blowing a gale, and we heard that the boats' crews had a fairly rough time. All they could do was to dump the mutton in the lee of a rock (where it was soon covered by drift snow) and dump the rest of the gear and come back. Arch Hoadley covered himself with glory by getting the first frostbite, three fingers, quite right again now. We put in four hours on deck getting the three boats snugged in and veering out all the available cable. We are anchored in 10 fathoms, with 75 fathoms of cable out, so unless it parts we are quite right. All day it is impossible to do anything. All the deck cargo is lashed up again, and we are quite ready for sea if necessary. The wind is coming straight off the ice slope. The foot is 100 feet high, and we are less than a mile away, but the waves are at least 4 feet high, and all the top is blown off them, so it is fairly solid. The queer part of it is that the sun has been shining serenely all through.

At present (11.30 p.m.) the sun has dipped behind the ridge, and even against the sun line one cannot see the skyline as it is all blurred and furry with driving snow.

The glass was pretty low again, but it has just started to rise, so we are hopeful of starting work again fairly soon.

The dogs are standing the present blow pretty well, but we lost four of them in the last one. That leaves us with 29, which is sufficient, as it is quite decided to have only two parties, as it is getting so late and the coal is very low. Murphy's party is being split up between ours and Wild's. We shall have two huts side by side and should be very swagger-looking. I will give you my rough idea of the coast over the page.

Sunday, 14th, 1912. All day Tuesday it was blowing hard and all hands slept, wrote or played bridge, and slept again till Wednesday, when the process was repeated till about 4 p.m., when the main hatch was opened and some stores opened and redistributed to suit the new arrangement of parties. Five of us trimmed coal for about three hours, and so earned a wash! The wind was dying down, so at about 8 p.m. the launch was put out and a small cargo sent ashore. On Thursday, 11th, all hands started work at 8 a.m. The launch going ashore first with a small load and a party who erected a pair of shear legs, using two royal masts of the wireless gear. They also cut a landing step in the little ice face so that cases
can be easily passed from the boats. While the launch was ashore we were loading the two whale boats and making the timber of the huts up into small rafts. Practically all the benzine and timber was worked off the poop deck in this way before 2 p.m. About four tons is taken each trip by the launch, two boats and then timber towing behind again, so you can imagine what a blessing the launch is. Just imagine rowing it all in, each boat with only half a load, so as to leave room for rowing.

After dinner, about 2 p.m., some more of us went ashore, and then as each load came alongside we would unload as quickly as possible and then sledge it away while the boats got away for another load. We sledge everything up on to the rocks in case of a thaw, as the ice we are sledging over is evidently covering a fairly deep gully and a few days’ sunlight as hot as we have had, may easily convert it into slush. While sledgeing we separate the stores out as much as possible, getting the food stuffs all together and the benzine and kerosene well separated. At 6 p.m. half of the crowd went back and turned in while we worked on till 2.30 a.m., when we were not sorry to get back to the ship where we were relieved by those who had turned in. We had a good meal of cocoa, sardines, tinned meat, bread, etc., and got to bed till 9.30 on Friday.

We seldom slept sounder. On deck again at 10 a.m., and worked till 6 p.m., and then watch below once more. As my bunk is rather uncomfortable, being built against the counter of the ship in one of those 6 berth cabins you saw, and sloping 45 deg. sideways and 30 deg. downwards lengthways, I turned into Moyes’ bunk (Moyes was working in the other watch) so was rather surprised to wake up about 11 o’clock to find some of them getting to bed. Was told the wind was up again. The motor boat had gone ashore with Dr. Mawson, Wild and four or five others to camp. They had two tents pitched and reindeer sleeping bags, and cooking gear out, so should be all right. It was specially cheerful for us on the 2 a.m. to 10 a.m. watch, and we had a great sleep right on to breakfast.

Wind up again as strong as ever and nothing doing except that we got a load up on deck (coal brikettes and cases) ready to load again when the weather moderates. Same again to-day, only wind is worse and glass down to 28.5. Sun still shining brightly. It will be a bit monotonous if this is regular summer weather. Two days fine and two or three days blow, as it would be quite impossible to sledge.

I am glad to say that my box of books is ashore and apparently quite dry. I am also lucky in having all my clothing dry, as one or two cases are rather badly damaged by water, although we had a fairly calm trip down. (Lat. 67.5, Long: 142, 30 E.).

Tuesday, 16th Jan., 1912. I turned in early on Sunday night, but at 2 a.m. we were turned out as the wind had died right down. We started to get more coal bricks up, and the
launch came off in answer to our signals per whistle. By the
time the launch was about a quarter of a mile from the ship,
however, it was blowing worse than ever, and she went back
without a load, and we all turned in once more. Monday morn-
ing, at 8 a.m., saw it still blowing, but at 2 p.m. it was calm
and we got a couple of loads off. I was among those who
changed places with the marooned party. We worked till
midnight, when the wind was up again, so we turned in, 18
of us ashore altogether; 3 tents (sledging type, 5 bamboo
poles each, and the skirt loaded down with cases) and a hut
about 10 x 12 built of cases and roofed in with hut timber,
quite snug, especially when we crawled into our reindeer bags
and closed the slit. They are beautifully warm. It was freez-
ing quite hard, and although I took off my coat and socks, in
about five minutes I was almost hot. Had a glorious sleep
right round the dial till nearly 1 o'clock to-day, of the tent flapping on the poles. Had lunch on sheeps' tongues,
pickles, biscuits, jam, treacle and cocoa, boiled over a Primus
in a Nansen Cooker. After that the launch came back to the
ship, and we went on unloading up till 11 o'clock, changing
parties for tea. We came off and got ours about 11.20 p.m., the last load for the night has just pushed off, and
we have been sent below till 6.30 breakfast, and warned to get
all our letters finished to-night, as there is only about ten tons
more coal left to shift and the "grasshopper." Would you mind,
keeping this letter for me, as it is all I've got so far in the way
of a diary.


Just another line to tell you that after sighting the island at
dinner time, we came straight towards the northern end of the
island, and sure enough there was the "Aurora" snugly under
the land. As we came in, a whaler put off to us with Captain
Davis and a crew of the "boiling down" men employed by
Hatch, of N.Z. A few minutes later the motor launch came
alongside, steered by Dr. Mawson.

We steamed slowly in and anchored inside the "Aurora" in
12 fathoms, about a mile from the shore. We are on the
western side of the island, as the wind is S.E. The usual an-
chorage is on the other side. As soon as we were anchored
we got the "Toroa's" launch over the side and loaded up both
launches and the "Aurora's" whaler with stores and went
ashore. Beached the boats, and got the gear ashore, and then
strolled round a little bit. There are eight of Hatch's men
here, and eight more who came down in the ketch "Clyde" a
month ago, and were promptly wrecked on the western beach.
No lives lost. They will probably go back in this boat about
six months earlier than they expected. Hatch's men knew
nothing about the expedition at all. The "Aurora" men all
seem in good fettle, though they had a very rough time. Half
the flying bridge washed away and the aeroplane case dam-
aged. Otherwise O.K. All the stores for here are out of the
“Aurora” and ours are to go out as soon as possible. Coffee
at 5.30 a.m. to-morrow. The “Torea” will then get away as
soon as she can, while we stand by to fix up the Macquarie
party. The worst job is getting the wireless gear up to its
proposed site, about 500 feet up.

During our little wander round we caught and examined a
couple of penguins, and saw a sea-tiger on the beach, a beauti-
ful white animal, like a large seal. When excited, it reared
up, showing a huge mouth, its head looking just like a snake.
A small sea elephant was shot and stripped to feed the dogs
which are on the island.

We all camp on shore after to-night, till the “Aurora” goes,
taking the shipwrecked crews’ hut, while they come here.

The island is a very forbidding looking place. Steep, almost
precipitous hills about 600 feet high, covered with tussock
grass, apparently a flat strip of land about half a mile long,
connects the mainland with North Head. Hatch’s hut is on
the south-west end of this strip, and our hut is to be at the
north-west end.

One little humorous touch (and we’ve had plenty of them
on this ship). Coming near the island after slowing down and
taking a few soundings, our old skipper (Holyman by name)
put his only sketch of the island in the locker on the bridge,
shut it with a bang and said “We’ve found the island without
a chart, and we’ll go in without one. Full speed ahead.”